

BRONG AHAFO



The Brong Ahafo Region was created on 4th April 1959 (by the Brong Ahafo Region Act No. 18 of 1959). The Act defined the area of the Brong Ahafo Region to consist of the northern and the western part of the then Ashanti Region and included the Prang and Yeji areas that before the enactment of the Act formed part of the Northern Region. Before the Ashanti Empire was conquered by the British in 1900, the Brong and Ahafo states to the north and northwest of Kumasi (the capital of Ashanti empire and the present Ashanti Region) were within the empire. Nana Akumfi Ameyaw III traces his ancestry to King Akumfi Ameyaw I (1328-63), under whose reign the Brong Kingdom with its capital at Bono Manso grew to become the most powerful kingdom of its time. Indeed oral tradition has it that nearly all the different groups of the Akans, including the Asante, trace their origins to Bono after migrating from the "north".

The first remembered King of the Bono Kingdom is King Asaman, who is credit with leading his Akan people from what may be present day Burkina Faso or even further north, to Bonoland (Buah, 1998). Later migrations led to the Asantes, Fantes, Denkyira and other Akans settling in their present locations. Nana Akumfi Ameyaw is credited with the creation of gold dust as a currency and gold weights as a measure, later developed and adopted by all the other Akan groups, particularly the Asante. Legend has it that he even supported his yam shoots with sticks made of pure gold. It was when King Opoku Ware of Asante defeated Bono in 1723 and destroyed Bono Manso that the capital moved to Techiman (Takyiman). Techiman and other Bono states therefore came under the Asante Empire until 1948 when Akumfi Ameyaw III led the secession of Bono from Asante, supported by other Bono states such as Dormaa.

The most significant change the British administration in Ashanti brought to the people of the Brong and Ahafo states until 1935 was that it made them independent of Kumasi clan chiefs (Busia, 1951, pp. 165-166). The British administration worked out a strategy that severed the interference of the Kumasi clan chiefs with the internal affairs of the Brong and Ahafo states. When the Ashanti Confederacy was restored in 1935 by the British administration, however, most of the Brong and Ahafo states saw that their independence from Ashanti was being threatened, because by restoring the Ashanti Confederacy, they were to revert to their former overlords in Kumasi. Though the Brong states joined the Ashanti Confederacy, most of them were not happy with the re-union because they felt their long historical association with Ashanti had brought them nothing.

The opportune time came when in 1948 Nana Akumfi Ameyaw III, the Omanhene (paramount chief) of Techiman led Techiman to secede from the Ashanti confederacy (Austin, 1964, p. 294). The secession of Techiman was supported by some of the Brong states and this led to the formation of the dynamic Brong political movement, Brong Kyempem Federation. The movement was formed in April 1951 at Dormaa Ahenkro under the auspices of the Dormaa State.³ The main objective of the movement was to struggle for a separate traditional council and a separate region for the Brong Ahafo states.

The name of the movement was later changed to the Brong Kyempem Council. In March 1955, the Prime Minister informed the National Assembly that the government was considering "the possibility of setting up a Brong Kyempem Council" to fulfil the desire of the Brongs for the establishment of a development committee for their area and that the government would "examine the case for the establishment of two administrative regions for Ashanti". In March 1959, the Brong Ahafo Bill was passed under a certificate of urgency by Parliament. The Brong Ahafo Region Act was enacted after receiving the Governor General's assent. Sunyani was made the capital of the new region.

Political and administrative structure

Brong Ahafo has 19 administrative districts, with District Chief Executives (DCEs) as the political heads. The DCEs are assisted by District Co-ordinating Directors (DCDs) who are responsible for the day to day running of the districts. The DCEs work under the Regional Minister (the political head of the region), while the DCDs are under the Regional Coordinating Director. Sunyani is the administrative headquarters of the region, where the Regional Minister resides. The legislative wing of the is the District Assembly. One third of its membership is appointed by Government in consultation with local leaders, while the remaining are elected on non-party lines. The District Assembly elects its own Presiding Member. The District Assemblies are divided into Town and Area Councils, depending on the population and land area of the district. A compact settlement or town with a population of 5,000 or more qualifies to have a Town Council status. An Area Council is made up of 2 or more towns which when pulled together has a population of 5,000 or more. The region has 37 Town Councils and 106 Area Councils. Eight of the districts bear the name of the district capital, with the remaining five (Asunafo, Asutifi, Tano, Jaman and Sene) named after geographical land marks or historical events.

Another aspect of the relates to constituencies and areas for electoral purposes. The region is divided into 21 constituencies, which are further subdivided into 582 electoral areas or electoral units. These electoral areas consist of 2,292 basic units called polling stations. Each of eight districts has two constituencies with the remaining five having one constituency each. Wenchi, one of the districts with two constituencies has the highest number of electoral areas (54), electoral units (214) and polling stations (223). Seven districts have 48 electoral areas each. The Sene district has the least number of electoral areas (30) and polling stations (98). There has been the need for the creation of six new districts.

Physical features

The Brong Ahafo Region, formerly a part of the Ashanti Region, was created in April 1959. It covers an area of 39,557 square kilometres and the second largest region in the country (16.6%) and shares boundaries with the Northern Region to the north, the Ashanti and Western Regions to the south, the Volta Region to the east, the Eastern Region to the southeast and La Cote d'Ivoire to the west. The central point of the landmass of Ghana is in the region, at Kintampo. It has 19 administrative districts, with Sunyani as the regional capital. The region lies in the forest zone and is a major cocoa and timber producing area. The northern part of the region lies in the savannah zone and is a major grain- and tuber-producing region. The region has a population of 1,815,408, indicating an intercensal growth rate of 2.5 per cent over the 1984 population figure. Enumeration covered all the 17,546 localities in the region.

Climate

The region has a tropical climate, with high temperatures averaging 23.9oC (75oF) and a double maxima rainfall pattern. Rainfall ranges, from an average of 1000mm millimetres in the northern parts to 1400 millimetres in the southern parts.

Vegetation

The region has two main vegetation types, the moist semi-deciduous forest, mostly in the southern and southeastern parts, and the guinea savannah woodland, which is predominant in the northern and northeastern parts of the region. The level of development and variations in economic activity are largely due to these two vegetation types. For example, the moist semi-deciduous forest zone is conducive for the production of cash crops, such as cocoa and cashew.

Brong Ahafo is one of the three largest cocoa producing areas in the country, mainly in the Ahafo area, which shares common border with western Ashanti. A lot of the cashew in Ghana is produced in Brong Ahafo, some of which are processed into brandy and cashew wine at Nsawkaw in Wenchi. Timber is also an important forest product, produced mainly in the Ahafo area around Mim, Goaso and Acherensua. Other cash crops grown in the forest area are coffee, rubber and tobacco. The main food crops are maize, cassava, plantain, yam, cocoyam, rice and tomatoes. Yam production is very high in the guinea savannah zone, around Techiman, Kintampo, Nkoranza, Yeji, Prang and Kwame Danso.

Tourist attraction sites

The ecology of the region has produced lots of tourist attractions. Some rivers create beautiful tourist sites as they flow on rocky landscapes. The Pumpum River falls 70 metres down some beautiful

rocky steps to form the Kintampo Falls, as it continues its journey towards the Black Volta. The Fuller Falls, 7 kilometres west of Kintampo, (the centre point of the country), also provides a scenic beauty as River Oyoko gently flows over a series of cascades towards the Black Volta. Another scenic site is the River Tano Pool which houses sacred fish that are jealously protected by the local community who live along the river near Techiman. There is also a pool on the Atweredaa River, which runs through the Techiman market.

Another type of tourist attractions are caves, sanctuaries and groves. The Buabeng-Fiema Monkey sanctuary, located 22 kilometres north of Nkoranza, covers a forest area of 4.4 square kilometres. It serves as home for black and white colobus and mona monkeys. The forest also provides a natural habitat for different species of butterfly. Buoyem caves, which are hidden in a dry semi-deciduous forest, house a large colony of rosetta fruit bats. The Pinihini Amovi caves are also historic underground caves near Fiema. The tourist attraction sites in the region cannot be complete without mention of the Tanoboase Sacred Grove. It is believed that the grove is the cradle of Brong civilization.

The grove served as a hideout to the Brongs during the 18th century Brong-Ashanti wars. It is currently used for hiking and rock climbing. The Bui National Park, stretching from Atebubu through Banda to the proposed site of the Bui Dam, is home to many rare wildlife and vegetation. Part of the Volta Lake flows through the region and Yeji, Prang, and Kwame Danso are important towns along the banks of the lake, which can serve as growth poles for tourism development in the region.

Nationality and ethnicity

The composition of the population by nationality is summarised below. More than 97 per cent of persons in the region are Ghanaians, with 94 per cent being Ghanaian by birth. The proportion of Ghanaians by birth in the districts ranges from 91 to 97 per cent, with Sunyani having the highest (96.7%). Ghanaians by naturalization constitute between 5 and 6 per cent of the total populations of Sene, Kintampo, Nkoranza, Jaman, Dormaa and Asutifi. Atebubu district has the highest proportion of other ECOWAS nationals (3.8%), while Berekum has the highest proportion of other African nationals (1.5%) and non-Africans (1.2%).

Foreign nationals deal in wood-processing activities a lot, and may account for the small but significant proportion of non-Africans in Berekum, where wood-processing is one of the main industrial activities. Berekum also has some religious organisations, mainly Catholic, and other foreign NGOs with significant expatriate personnel carrying out social work. The high proportion of ECOWAS nationals in Atebubu (3.8%) and Sene (2.8%) is difficult to explain, since the districts do not share a border with any of the neighbouring countries. It may be due to migration from Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso and Cote d'ivoire.

Ethnicity

The predominant ethnic group in the region and in all the districts is Akan, except in Sene where the Guans predominate. Apart from Sene and Atebubu where the Ewes and Gurmas are the second predominant ethnic groups, the Mole-Dagbon ethnic group is the second largest in all the other districts. Three other groups of northern origin, Gurma, Grusi and Mande-Busanga are one-tenth of the region's population. Ethnic groups of northern origin are therefore slightly more than a quarter of the region's population. The large proportion of Ewes in Sene is due to the fishing activities along the region's side of the Volta Lake.

The presence of the Guans in large proportion in Atebubu and Sene may not be due entirely to migration. That part of the region was formerly part of the Northern Region, inhabited by the Gonjas, one of the Guan sub-groups, before it was made part of Brong Ahafo in 1959. More than three-fifths of the Akans in the region are Brongs. Asantes and Ahafo are two other recognisable Akan groups in the region. Dagombas constitute the highest proportion of Mole Dagbons. Three other ethnic groups, Kusasi, Nabdom and Dagomba, constitute more than one third of the Mole Dagbons. The remaining groups from the south, Guans, Ewes and Ga-Dangme are less than one tenth of the region's population.

Religious affiliation

The distribution of the population by the various religious denominations in the region is nearly the same as the total country, except traditional religion and no religion that exchange the order. Christianity (70.8%) has the largest following, while Islam (16.1%) and no religion (7.8%) are the significant others. Another change of order different from the national is that Catholics (22.6%) outnumber Pentecostals (20.8%). Brong Ahafo has a strong Catholic legacy, with many Catholic institutions including 7 hospitals in 7 districts. It is therefore no surprise that the Church chose Fiapre in the Sunyani District for the establishment of the first Catholic University in the country. Large followers of Christianity are in all districts. Over four-fifths of the population in Berekum (87.4%), Jaman (83.9%), Sunyani (80.9%) and Dormaa (80.3%) are Christians. The protestant churches (28.6%) have the largest following in Berekum, followed by the Pentecostal (28.0%).

Pentecostals outnumber Catholics in eight districts, the most prominent being Sunyani where the difference is more than 10 percentage points. Jaman has the largest proportion of Catholics, where nearly two out of every five people are Catholics. Though more than half of the population in Atebubu (50.5%), Kintampo (51.4%) and Sene (56.6%) profess to be Christians, the proportion of Christians in these districts is low compared to the other districts.

Islam is practised mainly in Kintampo (29.7%) and Atebubu (24.4%), where Moslems outnumber the two most professed Christian denominations, Catholics (21.4%) and Pentecostals (17.6%). The Moslems are mainly Mole-Dagbon who are quite a substantial group in the districts. Techiman (20.7%) and Wenchi (20.0%) also have a sizeable number of Moslems, though Catholics outnumber them. Islam (6.1%) and traditional religion (10.6%) are least practised in Berekum. Traditional religion is most practised in Sene (18.8%), followed by Atebubu (15.7%) and Kintampo (10.0%). Sene also has the largest proportion professing no religion (13.6%).

Traditional religion ranks second after Pentecostal while no religion ranks fourth after Catholic in the district. Nkoranza also has more than one tenth (11.6%) of the population professing no religion. The proportion of females professing the Christian faith (73.5%) is higher than males (68.2%) in the region, in all districts in the region and total country. Apart from Catholics in Sunyani and Berekum where the proportion of males is higher than females, and Sene where the proportion of male Pentecostals is higher than females, the proportion female is larger than male in all three major Christian denominations in all districts. On the other hand, the proportion of males professing Islam, traditional and no religion, in all districts of the region, is higher than females.

Type of dwelling

Rooms in compound houses are the predominant occupied units by households in most districts, except Kintampo (31.8%) and Sene (41.4%) where the separate house is the predominant dwelling unit. Jaman (62.1%) and Berekum (59.8%) have the highest proportion of households occupying rooms in compound houses, with four districts (Sunyani, Tano, Wenchi and Techiman) having between 50.0 per cent and 60.0 per cent of households occupying such units. Flats and apartments are used more in Sunyani (4.6%) than in any other district. Except for Berekum (3.4%) and Asunafo (2.1%), all other districts have less than 2.0 per cent of households occupying flats and apartments. The use of huts as occupied units is most common in Sene (because of the large rural settlements) while Sunyani and Berekum (the most urbanised districts) have most of the improvised homes (kiosk/container). Tents are the least used occupied units.

Cultural and Social Structure

Nationality

Ghanaians by birth and parenthood constitute 94.0 per cent of the population of the region. This is higher than the national proportion of 92.2 per cent. Naturalized Ghanaians constitute an additional 3.4 per cent, while other ECOWAS nationals make up 1.9 per cent with other Africans and non-Africans being 0.8 per cent. The sex-composition of Ghanaians by birth indicates that there are more female Ghanaians by birth than males, while there are male non-Ghanaians than females.

Migration

Nearly 71 per cent of the population are born in the localities where they were enumerated, with a further 7.5 per cent born in another locality within the region. The rest of the population originate from outside the region, with most of them from the regions which share border with the region. Favourable climatic conditions, abundance of arable land and proximity may be factors that attract people from the north.

Ethnicity

The predominant ethnic group is the Akan, (62.7%) followed by the Mole-Dagbon (15.4%) and Grusi (4.2%), as shown in Figure 1.1. Within the Akan group, the Brong (Bono, including Banda) are the largest subgroup (61.4%), followed by the Asante (13.3%) and Ahafo (9.5%). Among constituents of the Mole-Dagbon group, the Dagaaba are the largest (44%) subgroup.

Religious affiliation

Christianity has the largest following (71.0%), followed by Islam (16.1%) and traditional religion (4.6%). A significant proportion (7.8%) reported affiliation with no religion. Catholics are the largest denomination of the Christian faith (22.6%), followed by Pentecostal/ Charismatic (20.8%) and Protestant (17.0%). More females (73.5%) than males (68.2%) profess the Christian faith. The reverse is true for Islam, traditional religion and those with no religion.

Literacy

Education forms an important determinant of the quality of manpower. As such, the educational level of the population, to some extent, reflects the level of social and economic development of a country or a community. It is also well known that education constitutes one of the most important factors influencing demographic behaviour and the level of fertility of a population. Statistics on literacy provide a measure of progress in the educational development and are necessary in planning for the promotion of adult literacy. Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write in any language and relates to those aged 15 years and older. 48.5 per cent of the population of the region, aged 15 years and older, are not literate. This picture is only better than that of the three Northern Regions where the illiteracy level is more than 70.0 per cent.

Since much information is written and transmitted in English, effective literacy level is based on those literate in English and a Ghanaian language. This means that effective literacy level for the region is 49.0 per cent, which is lower than the national average of 54.5 per cent. Information flow in terms of posters, brochures, and written adverts will seriously be hampered because of the low literacy level. The differences between male and female literacy levels. There are significant differences between the sexes in the not literate and the literate in English and Ghanaian Language groups. Among the males, 41.1 per cent are illiterates, which is far lower than that of females (56.0%).

Educational attainment

A little over two fifths of the population (42.0%) aged six and older, have never been to school. The proportion of the population that has attained primary (22.3%) and middle/JSS (23.3%) is almost the same; only 11.2 per cent have attained a level above the middle/JSS. The education attainment is the same for males and females at the pre-school level (1.2% each) and the primary school level, (22.5% males and 22.0% females). Above these two attainment levels, male attainment is higher than that of females at each subsequent level. This low attainment level for females has implication for the economic characteristics of the population as well as fertility behaviour.

A higher percentage of females (68.5%) than males (63.9%) are currently in pre-school and primary school. The percentage of males (60.2%) is lower than that of females (64.3%) at the primary school level but the pattern changes to that of a higher percentage of males than females, at each subsequent higher level after the primary school level, (Figure 1.5). More than three fifths (62.1%) of those currently in school are in the primary school, followed by those in middle/JSS (22.4%). The proportion of the population currently at the post-secondary level (1.3%), (including training college, nursing, etc.), is the lowest.

Economic Characteristics

Economic goods and services are produced and supplied to the market through these earning activities. Statistical data on economic activities and of the population, therefore, are essentially required for social and economic development planning.

Occupation

Agriculture and related work is the major occupation in all districts, accounting for 66.4 per cent of the region's economically active population. It is the main occupation for about two-thirds of the economically active group in nine of the 13 districts. In the three most urbanised districts, Sunyani (45.9%) Berekum (50.9%) and Techiman (57.1%), Agriculture and related work account for between 45.0-60.0 per cent. Sene, the most rural district, in particular, has 4 out of 5 economically active population in this sector. Significant proportions of the economically active persons are engaged as Production, Transport operators and Labourers (11.3%), Sales workers (7.6%), and Professional and related workers (5.8%). 9 out of the 13 districts have proportions of Productive, Transport operators and Labourers above 10.0 per cent. 3 out of the nine, Sunyani (14.9%), Berekum (14.8%) and Kintampo (13.8%) have the highest proportions. The other 4 districts have less than 10.0 per cent.

At the regional level Sales workers form only 7.6 per cent. However, at the district level, Techiman (13.7%), Sunyani (13.4%) and Berekum (11.2%) have relatively high proportions engaged in sales. This is expected as Techiman is the largest market centre in the region. In addition, Sunyani and Berekum are urbanised districts, where sales workers are usually predominant. Proportions of Professional, Technical and related workers are generally low in most districts but Sunyani (9.0%) and Berekum (8.7%) have relatively high proportions. These same districts also have appreciable proportions of service workers 8.6 and 7.0 per cent respectively.

Educational attainment and literacy

Statistics on educational attainment help in knowing the present educational levels of adult population as well as anticipated future requirements of educated manpower for various types of economic activity. Such data would be useful for policy makers to plan development and improvement of educational systems on one hand, and to plan economic development programmes in the light of manpower requirements, on the other.

More than two fifths (42.0%) of the population, aged 6 years and older, have never been to school, a very discouraging picture.

Current school attendance

The proportion of attending primary school is higher (64.2%) than that for males (60.1%), at the regional level. However, at the middle/JSS, SSS and beyond, the proportion of males exceed that of females at every level. This is also true for all districts except Sunyani and Berekum where female proportions for middle/JSS are slightly higher (24.2%) and (22.9%) than those for males (24.0%) and (22.3%), respectively.

Literacy

Most information is transmitted in written form and therefore the ability to read and write is very essential. The proportion of the population not literate (48.5%) in the region is higher than the national average (42.1%). The level of literacy for the region in all four-language categories, English, Ghanaian language, English and Ghanaian language and other languages, is also lower than the national level.

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